

*Gather in a comfortable place in your house. The whole family present. Even if you have family members that are not Catholic. The lesson is geared to Adults and children 5<sup>th</sup> grade to seniors in High School. That should not mean that younger children should not be present or children in College or even grandparents or other relative (uncles, aunts, cousins etc.) that you want to invite*

*Please read the following Story out loud. One person should have the lesson but you may break up the leading of the lesson (story, questions, prayer) amongst other members of the family)*

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It was a typical Summer Day in Aitkin. This was my first summer here, the year was 2011. I left the office for lunch at the rectory. I can't remember what I had to eat, I'm sure it was unremarkable. The central air was on, my cats were wrestling on the floor, their regular mid-day match, and I had in my hand my most favorite of things... my Direct TV remote - Yeah!

Most people don't appreciate the same freedoms I have as a single adult male watching TV. For me there's never a fight for the remote with someone. No competition. And it is good!

I was still pretty new with this TV and system. My former parish in Pine City, MN had given me this 52" flat-screen LG TV as a going-away present. I was learning the channels and trying to develop "My Favorites" channels to streamline my searches. The first thing I did was to delete all the non-HD channels and then the Lifetime Channel, Hallmark, Most News Networks, MTV, Cartoon, Oprah, Cooking Channels, Shopping Networks and all other channels akin to these.

That day while "surfing", my attention was caught by the Discovery Channel and a program called "The Blue Planet". It was an unusual choice for a guy that likes to watch sports, cop shows and old movies. I think my eyes were attracted by the fantastic oceanography and the colors of each featured species captured to film.

And then I saw is the most unusual creature I have ever see in my whole life, a Leafy Sea Dragon or (*Phycodorus Eques*) also known as Glauert's Seadragon. It lives off the southern and western coastal regions of Australia and there is currently no concern for its conservation. It is a carnivore and they grow to a length of 8-9.5 inches. The Leafy Sea Dragon change colors to blend in to their surroundings and also possesses numerous leaf-like protrusions that camouflage it from predators (making it look like sea weed). The delicate nature of this creature and the various defenses it has to protect itself correlates to its fragile appearance.

It looked like a spirit under water, translucent and precious, held in balance, floating between worlds.

As you can see, I was impressed. All of the fins and protrusions. The color. How in its design this beautiful thing has survived the vastness of the ocean, its currents and storms and the many predators, century after century, millennial after millennial even perhaps billions and billions of years.

I read about the Sea Dragon later that day:

*Except for mating, sea dragons are solitary animals. They reach sexual maturity by one or two years of age, at which time the males court the females. A female produces up to 250 pink eggs. They are fertilized when she deposits them onto the male's tail. The eggs attach to a region called the brood patch, which supplies oxygen to them until they hatch. As with seahorses, the male cares for the eggs until they hatch, which takes about 9 weeks. The male shakes and pumps his tail to aid hatching. Sea dragons are completely independent as soon as they hatch.*

Wow!!! Something I had never known about or seen. The show “The Blue Planet”, Blue my mind (jk). One thing I wanted to know – what is this creation’s purpose? What does it do for the cosmos, the ocean, fellow sea creatures, I guess (in other words) “Why Sea dragon?” As I continued to listen to the narrator explain this creature (Morgan Freeman or Richard Attenborough) the script provided no insight. This creature does not travel very far, it doesn’t eat very much, it isn’t eaten by others, it lives alone and it is rarely seen by other creatures in the sea and most definitely not by humans (unless filmed). So what? Why? I don’t get it. Even a mosquito pollinates a certain plant. And then it came to me....

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....The reason the Sea dragon was created, the reason it exists in that little world is to impress me, that I can see the handiwork of a Designer’s great work, mightier than any invention of human making. We could never do this. There’s no way WE could make something like this and no way that “nothing” created this. It can come from something, it is alive, it is sublime, it is beautiful, it’s gracious, it is mysterious and it is for you and it is for me. The Sea dragon came from something as all creatures do.

The first question is: What or who is that something?

Other Discussion Questions:

- What do you make / or can you make that says something about who you are?
- What is something that is designed or invented by a human being that amazes you?
- If you could invent something that would help our human race – what would that be?
- Is every invention in our history related to God in some way? How? Or is it just human intelligence at work?
- What does God make or what has He made that impresses you?

On another creation of God that impresses me: The Ozone Layer

*Someone take you phone and read to the group a little bit about the Ozone Layer. Find out about how thick it is.*

Other Discussion Questions:

- Did you know it was this thin?
- Does this exist on any other discernable planets in our galaxy?
- What does the Ozone layer say about the Creator’s concern for this tiny blue planet?

- Does it inspire you to take care for the Earth?
- How can we care for the Ozone layer?
- How should we care for the Earth?
- Is it Ok to litter?
- Is it Ok to pollute our waters?
- Is it Ok to take from her more than we need?
- Were you created for the world or was the world created for you?
- Why? What is your purpose in creation?

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*Pray a decade of the rosary (if not on beads then on ten created fingers) the 3<sup>d</sup> Joyful Mystery: The Nativity and after list all the creatures of God in that story.*

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*Now it's time for snacks or a little in home party... Thanks Mom!!!*

*Look for the The Blue Planet II on Discovery Channel your devices or satellite providers*

*More to come next month on the Story of Jenny*